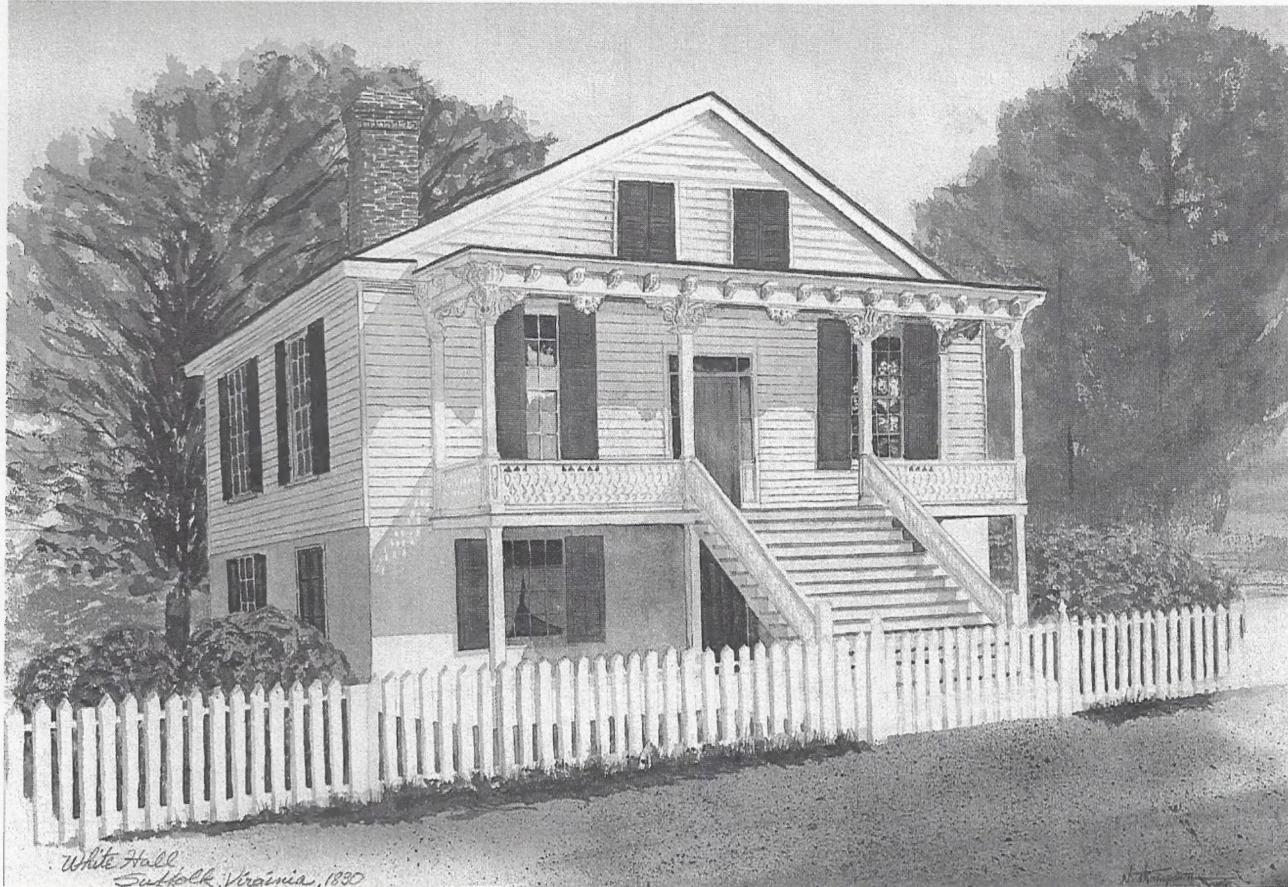




Volume 13, Issue 2

August 2004

## Thomas Jefferson Kilby House – Whitehall



The original of this Nat Thompson painting hangs in the Suffolk City Council Chamber today. The house was built around 1830 as Thomas Jefferson Kilby's home on Kilby (West Washington now) Street. In the 1940's it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. F. Whitney Godwin who drastically altered the exterior. It is the very handsome house behind a white brick wall across the street from Baker Funeral Home.

## Where Have All the Kilbys Gone?

This past spring we received a letter from SNHS member, Henry T. Miller of Sonoma, CA, regarding a member of the Kilby family. It read, in part, as follows.

*You might ask some of the Kilby family about one of their forefathers, John Kilby, a privateer (pirate) during the Revolutionary War, captured & imprisoned by the English. He was bailed out by Benjamin Franklin, and sent to France where he joined the crew of the Bon Homme Richard & fought with John Paul Jones through all his sea battles including the capture of the English man of war Serapis.*

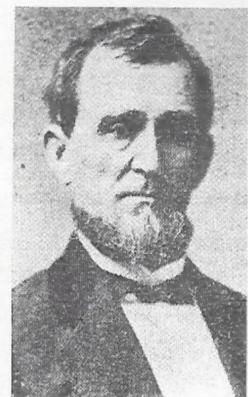
Scribner's Magazine of July 1905 contained a lengthy story entitled "Narrative of John Kilby" that covered his entire career. I have a copy of it myself and believe surely someone in the Kilby family would have one themselves.

A search of the Suffolk telephone book yielded no Kilbys. The Kilbys were a very prominent family Suffolk through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Today the name is all but gone from Suffolk.

John Thompson Kilby (1789-1838) came from Hanover County in 1830 to be first deputy, then clerk of Court in Nansemond County.

John Richardson Kilby (1819-1878) came to Suffolk from Hanover to attend school and work as an assistant to his uncle John Kilby. Over time he was elected sheriff, practiced law, edited Suffolk's first newspaper, served in the General Assembly, served as presidential elector in 1852, was a member of Suffolk's first school board, and was president of the first bank in Suffolk. Only in the last named endeavor was he less than successful, as that bank failed after a few years.

In 1859, John Richardson Kilby built a fine brick office on Main Street (number 347) next door to his home. It is the oldest brick commercial building still standing in town and now (with later additions) houses the Senior Citizens Service Center and the American Legion.



John Richardson Kilby

John Richardson's son, Wilbur John (1850-1907) followed his father in the legal profession and was judge in the Nansemond County Court. He was the first Superintendent of Cedar Hill Cemetery. It is written that he brought beauty and order to a formerly overgrown and neglected spot. He likely oversaw planting of the cedar trees.

Wilbur's son, Bradford (1871-1947), was an attorney as well and he served as Mayor of the old City of Suffolk. His wife, Mildred (1890-1983), was a fine musician. She and Yvonne Dawson (of the Dawson House) became great friends. Together they brought many noted musicians to Suffolk for concerts. Bradford Kilby's sister, Miss Hilah Kilby, lived with her brother and his wife. For many years their home was the big (310 N. Main) cottage at the front of College Court. Blanche Kilby Bell (1877-1966) was a leader in women's organizations in Suffolk. She was a cousin of Bradford and Hilah Kilby.

West Washington Street was once named Kilby Street. Our March 2002 newsletter talked of Thomas Jefferson Kilby (1803-1881) who lived on Kilby Street. He served in the General Assembly and was one of the founding members of Suffolk Christian Church (see our March 2002 Newsletter On Col. West's Corner).

He was married to Ann Upshur Smith Kilby. They are buried in a large family cemetery at the waterworks at the end of the former Kilby Street, overlooking Lake Kilby. Thomas Kilby's in-laws, the Smiths, once owned the millpond and gristmill at that site. Smith's Creek was the name of the tributary that flowed through there and became part of the Nansemond River.

William Hill Kilby (1904-1970), descendant of Thomas Jefferson Kilby, taught at Suffolk High. For many years after his death, SNHS gave a teacher award in his memory to teachers who encouraged an interest in local history.

Lake Kilby, the Kilby Shores neighborhood, and Kilby Shores Elementary School keep the name alive in Suffolk. Where have all the Kilbys gone? We would be happy to hear from Kilby descendants.

The John Richardson Kilby papers (1840-1899) are at the Duke University Library.

*SNHS note - The Maryland Historical Magazine of spring 1972 published John Kilby's account of his own adventures. John Kilby, the privateer, was the father of John Thompson Kilby. In our archives we found a letter written by Bradford Kilby to his father in June 1905. Young Bradford was on a transatlantic voyage on the British Cunard Line. He writes "Some people on board have copies of the July Scribner's and I have shown our article to Dr. Douglas [M.D., PhD] and Dr. Flick, Prof. of European History in Syracuse University."*

Kilby, by the way, commented, "all the passengers are people of culture and refinement and most of them wealthy." As your writer is reading and writing this missive on July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of 2004, she cannot help but note that Bradford Kilby celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> in 1905 on a British ship. The Americans wore small American flags and he wrote, "The whole day was given over to athletic games. Some of them were international contests, which the Americans easily won from the Britishers...The British flag had the American flag flying with it at the masthead today. The dining room was decorated with British and American flags and many firecrackers were fired off. Altogether, it was a glorious Fourth."



Royal Mail Steamship "Carpathia"

June 29, 1905.

Dear Father:- We have now been at sea two days, and are 551 miles from Sandy Hook. The weather has been ideal, the air balmy & the sun shining so warmly that all may sit on deck with no wraps in summer clothes.

This steamer was built in 1903, & is the third largest of the Cunard Line. She is so steady that I hardly feel that I am on a ship. I am beginning to meet people well at home.

Dr. Douglas, M.D., Ph.D. one of my

all parts of the world. A trans-Atlantic steamer's passengers form the most cosmopolitan aggregation that it is possible to get together.

My health is fine and I am looking forward with keen anticipation to our landing at Liverpool which will be on to-morrow about noon, July 7<sup>th</sup>. We have formed such pleasant friendships on board that every one is expressing mutual regrets at parting. After this, I will be unable to write long letters, but I will drop you postals, as often as possible. Please preserve my "Independent" for me and also the August & Sept. numbers of everybody's Magazine.

With best love to one & all, I am  
Your devoted son  
Bradford Kilby.

"Potemkin".

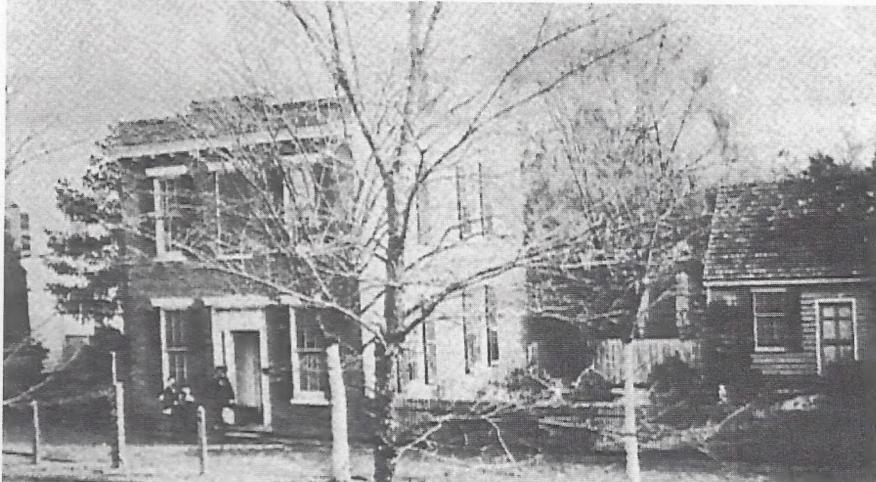
Mr. Law of our party was formerly in the coal business in Scranton, Pa., but now has retired. He owns a small farm, which covers an entire island in the Chesapeake Bay. The area of the island is 32 acres and is connected with the mainland by a bridge 350 ft. long. Mr. Law has a large bros.-goods factory in Brooklyn employs 150 men. Both the Laws & the Durlins are evidently very well to do people and are agreeable socially. Miss Elizabeth Law sings and is on the programme for a song to-night.

We have seen many spouting whales, one one time within 50 feet of the steamer. Our ship has been followed for many days by Mother Carey's Chickens and by a large school of Dolphins & Porpoises which live on the refuse matter thrown overboard.

On last Saturday evening, we had a dance on the aft-deck. After walking for some time, the old Virginia Reel

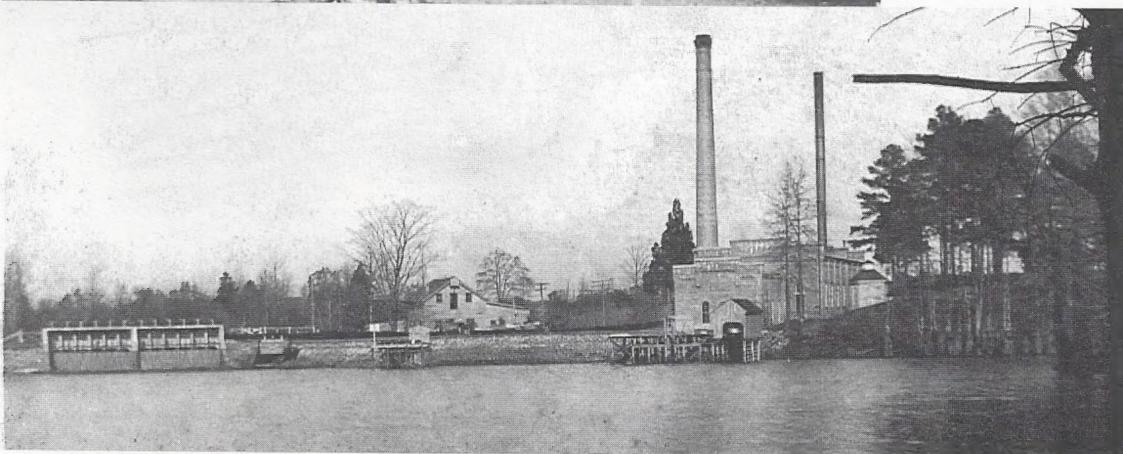
*SNHS Note: The name of the Carpathia rang a bell with Lynn Ward as she typed this. We called reference librarian, Jennifer Hayek, at Morgan Library who confirmed that the R.M.S. Carpathia was indeed the ship that rescued the R.M.S. Titanic survivors in 1912.*

## More about the Kilbys.

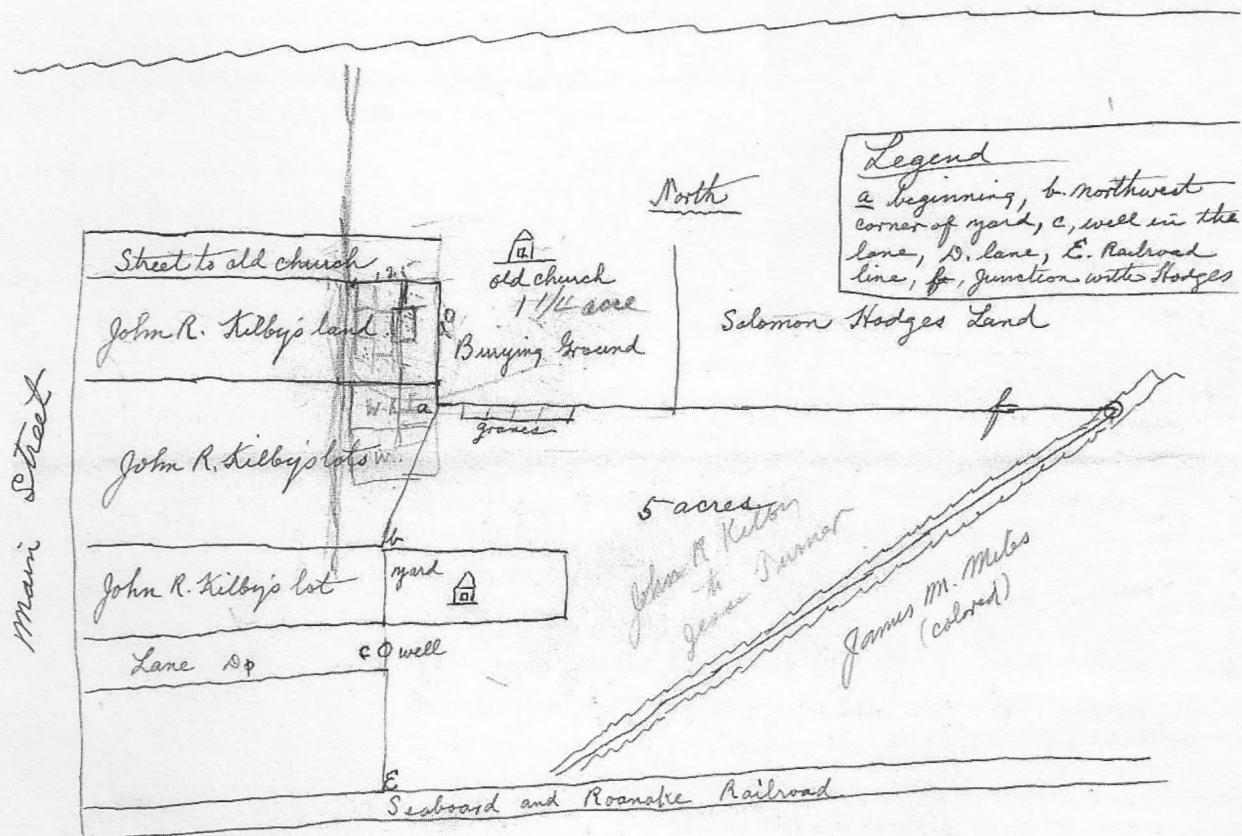


The Kilby Law Office

*This building is considered to be the oldest brick commercial structure in Suffolk. The front section is shown here soon after it was constructed as a law office for John Richardson Kilby in 1859. His son, Wilbur, later added a residential wing on the south side. The addition still stands but not the ornate porch that used to shelter its entry. The old office is now used by the American Legion and the Senior Citizens Service Center.*



*The dam at Lake Kilby. It was built to supply water for Suffolk, Portsmouth, and Berkley.*



*Nineteenth century plat of John R. Kilby's property on Main Street between Mahan Street and the present CSX railroad. The "burying ground" is, of course, Cedar Hill Cemetery.*

## Mailbag

I'm looking for my great-great-great-grandparents who were in the Suffolk, VA area at one time, and may have been from there.

They are Alexander (or Samuel) Davis and Eliza A. Cutts (Kutz). I have no information on Alexander, but do know that Eliza was born Oct. 27, 1808 in VA and died April 24, 1902 in Winston-Salem, NC. One, or both, could have been Native American, but I suspect it was Alexander, if this is the case.

I have found records of five Davis children. They are:

*Sarah A. – born 1840 – married Nathaniel Boles, Winston-Salem, NC*

*Emily Jane – born June 26, 1843 – died July 23, 1918 – married Martin Rominger and Reuben Crater, Winston-Salem, NC*

*Minerva O. – born May 9, 1845 – in VA – died Sept. 22, 1932 in Winston-Salem, NC – married William Henry Hausen*

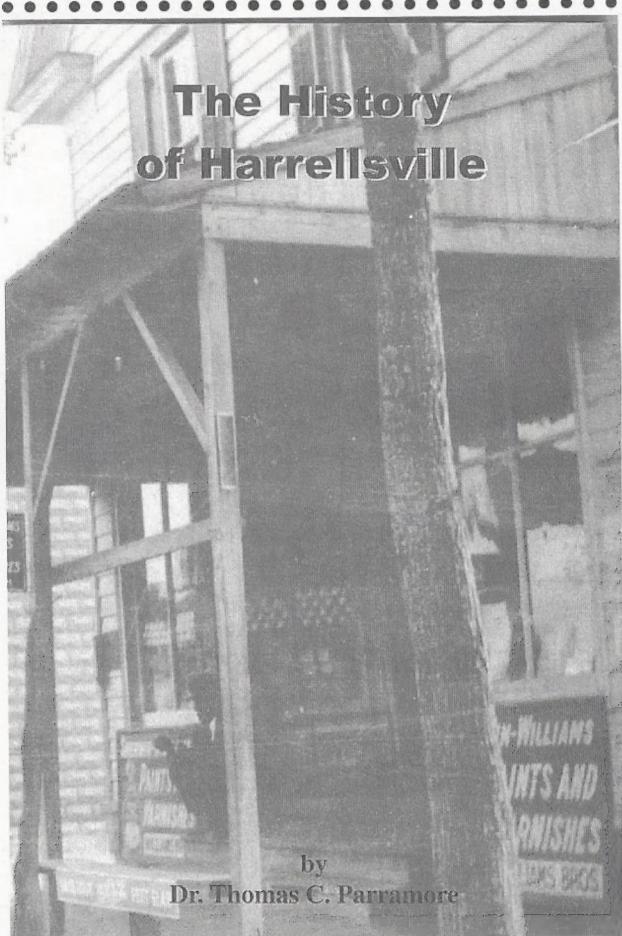
*Thomas Jefferson Davis – born Aug. 12, 1850 in Suffolk, VA – died Feb. 17, 1909 in NC – married Laura Ann Veach*

*Fannie S. – about 1851 – no other info – in NC*

*Thomas J.'s son's family bible states that he was born in Suffolk, VA in 1850.*

If you can supply any information, please write to:

Sue Nifong  
180 Dixie Club Rd.  
Winston-Salem, NC 27107  
Or call her at 1-336-764-5210



been this is a great resource. Proceeds from the sale will help the people in Harrellsville rebuild the house that was damaged by the storm.

The cost (with postage) is \$ 17.00. To order, write to:

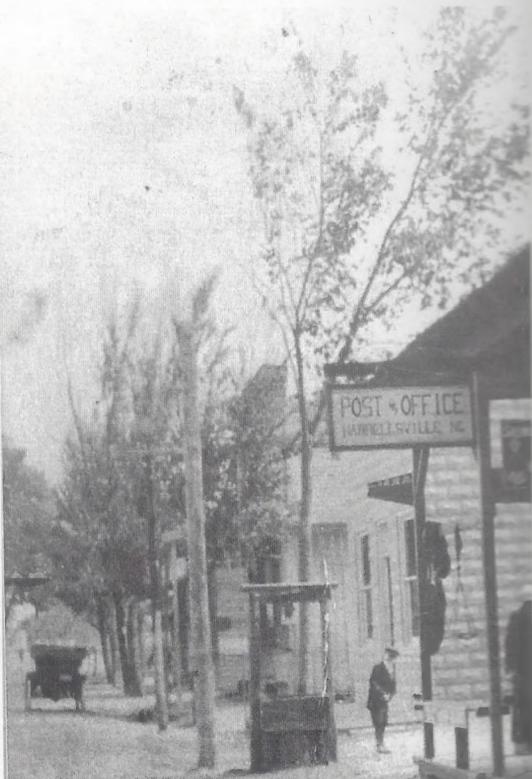
Marion Johnson  
Box 67  
Harrellsville, NC 27942

### News from Harrellsville

Gone with the wind Part II – The travelers on our Off the Beaten Track journey a couple of years ago visited Pitch Landing and the Harrellsville Historical Society building (the old Methodist parsonage) in Hertford County, NC. Hurricane Isabel left the old house at Pitch Landing unharmed but that ferocious storm dropped most of a large old oak tree on one end of the Historical Society building.

The building is owned by a family in Harrellsville who do not choose to repair it, but they will give it to the Harrellsville Historical Society if they can raise the money for the repair. One of the ways they are raising the money is through the sale of a newly published book, The History of Harrellsville. The book was written several years ago by Thomas C. Parramore, a native of Winton in Hertford County, who taught history for decades at Meredith College. Dr. Parramore was working on a history for the City of Norfolk when he died this past spring.

If you were as intrigued by Pitch Landing as I've always



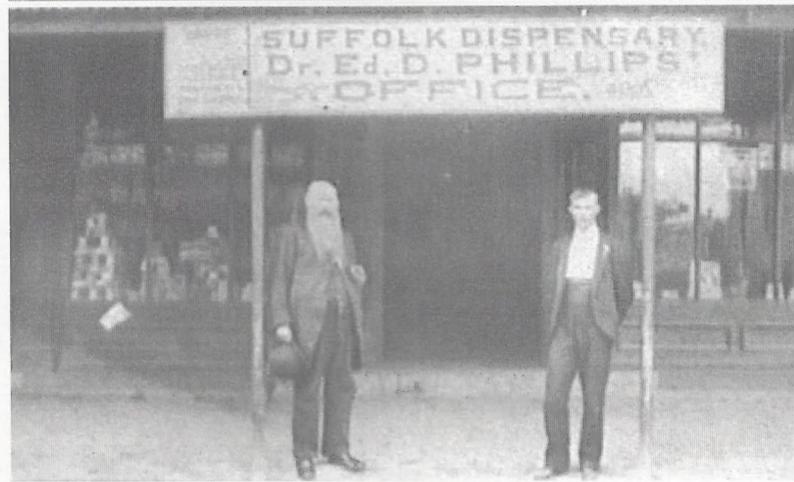
## Postscripts



From our September 2002 issue *Preserving a Sense of Place*

The J. H. Spivey Store at Wilroy was beside the Old Norfolk Road – now Nansemond Parkway. The road had probably just been paved for the first time when this picture was taken. Wilroy Road is on the left.

The railroad, then the Atlantic and Danville leased to the Southern Railroad, is still in use today by the short line, Commonwealth Railway. Beyond the store we can see a freight platform and a small trackside shanty. Other than the railroad tracks, only the cement pad under the gas pump can still be seen today at the edge of the woods.



Postscript to last year's *Healing the Sick* newsletter: We found in our archives this picture of Dr. Ned Phillips' office on the Square. We don't know the identity of the two men but one might well be Dr. Phillips.

### Another Postscript to *Healing the Sick*. From the *Norfolk Landmark*, May 1, 1907

### First Anniversary of Lakeview Sanitarium Celebrated

Suffolk, Va., April 30 – At Lakeview Sanitarium tonight

the pretty dining room was a scene of beauty and brilliance when the first anniversary of that institution was celebrated by an elaborate banquet given by Dr. E. R. Hart and Dr. J. E. Rawls to the physicians of the town and county. The color scheme was pink and green, dozens of beautiful carnations and blooming plants adding to the artistic effect. By each plate the menu card, done in white and gold, and tied with pink ribbon.

A banquet of nine courses was served and covers were laid for thirteen. Dr. E. R. Hart presided as toastmaster and introduced each speaker in appropriate words. Dr. J. W. Rawls responded to the toast of "Our Guests' Guests"; Dr. J. M. Gibson to the toast, "The Nansemond Medical Association"; Dr. Frank Morrison of Chuckatuck, to "The Physicians of the County"; Dr. John E. Phillips to "The Trained Nurse"; Dr. W. W. Murray, to the toast "Our Patients"; and Dr. D. L. Harrell to the toast "The Lakeview Sanitarium". The toasts were witty and clever and each was received with appreciative applause.

Those who enjoyed this delightful banquet were the hosts, Drs. E. R. Hart and J. E. Rawls, and their guests, Drs. John E. Phillips, J. M. Gibson, W. W. Murray, Thomas H. Barnes; R. H. Pretlow, C. J. Riddick, D. L. Harrell of Suffolk; Drs. Joseph Vann of Whaleyville, Frank Morrison of Chuckatuck, and J. G. Holland of Holland.

Article thanks to Lee Hart.

### The *Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory 1897 – 98*

lists the following physicians in Suffolk and Nansemond County.

· Arthur, P. H.	Somerton	· Murray, W. W.	Suffolk
· Burch, _____	Everets	· Parker, R. E.	Suffolk
· Barnes, T. H.	Elwood	· Phillips, E. D.	Suffolk
· Butts, Geo. W.	Chuckatuck	· Phillips, John E.	Suffolk
· Eley, Leslie	Chuckatuck	· Rabey, J. M.	Buckhorn
· Gibson, H. A.	Suffolk	· Riddick, C. J.	Suffolk
· Hargrove, L.	Driver	· Riddick, R. E.	Suffolk
· Harrell, D. L.	Cypress Chapel	· Stith, L. A.	Suffolk
· Holland, J. G.	Holland		
· Jordan, Wm. T.	Driver		

# Train Station News

**Spectacular Storytime** has been another success this summer. Children who have attended have been thoroughly entertained by our storytellers who told original & creative stories based on Suffolk history. The Train Station Committee would like to recognize the following volunteers who participated in our Spectacular Storytime: Sally Caton, Lisa Cross, Karen Grogan, and Adrienne Smith. What a talented group of storytellers! Many thanks for a job well done.

## Welcome to our new Volunteers!

We would like to recognize our newest railroad museum volunteers – Darcy Crain, Melody Esmaili, Holly Anne Hillard, Bill Lynch, Chris Beacham, and Margaret & Ashby Dashiell. Volunteers are given a 20% disc. on gift shop purchases the day they work (red dot items not incl). Be part of Suffolk's "Most Recognizable Landmark". Volunteer today! Call Lynn Bennett Ward, Museum Coordinator at 923-4750.

## Museum Exhibits

Charles Sledge recently completed an interesting exhibit titled, **The Pullman Car**. This exhibit includes a variety of photos, a berth ladder, a cross section of a Pullman car, and a historical brochure on how the Pullman car got its name.

Sue Woodward also completed an exhibit titled, **170 Years of Transportation**, to commemorate the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first train in Suffolk. On July 23, 1834, the first train was pulled by horses. This exhibit includes photos of the early conveyances of transportation such as the horse & buggy, mule carts, and the horseless carriage.

Stop by and view both of these fabulous exhibits!

## Items from our Gift Shop

We currently stock Arcadia Publishing *The Suffolk Peanut Festival* by Patrick Evans-Hylton, *Suffolk in Vintage Postcards* by the SNHS, and *Suffolk and Nansemond County* by Frances Watson Clark. Each book retails for \$20.89 (incl. tax). If you would like to order by mail, please send a check for \$24.95 which includes postage costs. *The Quiet Regiment*, published by SNHS has several stories about the Kilby family during the War Between the States – "Sadness in Suffolk in 1863" is about the sad death of John R. Kilby's sister, Julia Kilby Smith; "A Spy in the Family" is about Ann Upshur Smith Kilby and her family; and John Richardson Kilby is listed in the little volume as having been taken as a hostage with Peter Prentis. Another story in the book is by Wilbur J. Kilby. It is an excerpt from an article in the *Richmond Dispatch* of February 23, 1893.

The book is available at the train station for \$ 4.18 (tax included). Our out of town members may order it shipped for \$5.68. Also, we accept VISA or Mastercard (a \$10 minimum, please) If you purchase all three Arcadia books, Historical Society Members may utilize a 10% discount. We accept checks, VISA, or Mastercard. Order today – perfect for anniversaries, birthdays and the upcoming holidays.

## Museum Attendance

June: 730      July: 746 through 7/29

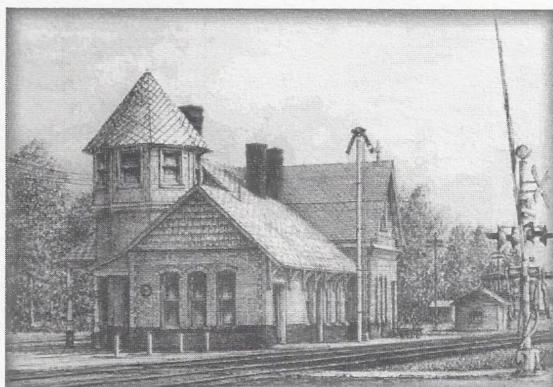
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check (Payable to SNHS) OR  Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Quiet Regiment</i>           | \$ 5.68  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Suffolk Peanut Festival</i>  | \$ 24.95 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Suffolk in Vintage Postcards</i> | \$ 24.95 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Suffolk and Nansemond County</i> | \$ 24.95 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set of all three Arcadia            | \$ 65.75 |
- (10% discount)

ORDER TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

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Dawson House Project

In honor of Nancy B. Webb

Mrs. Sybil B. Cale

Mrs. Linda Z. Mullins

Mrs. Melinda B. Trostlek

In honor of Susan T. Garrett

Anonymous

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Scherry Johnson

Jeffrey B. Johnson

Ann M. Lynch

Elizabeth L. McCoury

Thomas J. O'Connor III

Susan F. Woodward

## Late Breaking News

We are happy to announce that we have been awarded a grant by the National Trust for Historic Preservation from its Preservation Services Fund. The grant is to be used to match local funds to pay for the architectural and engineering study for an Historic Structure Survey for the Dawson House.

## Gift to the Train Station

Thanks to John Kravchak at Ervin Architectural Products for the millwork donated to the railroad museum for the repair work on the columns.

## Dawson Open House - May 2004

Thanks to Nita Bagnell and Mary Lawrence Harrell and their team of bakers and decorators for a wonderful party.

Photos thanks to Steve Jackson



Senator and Mrs. Fred Quayle enjoy their look around the house.



Ann White (l) and Judge William Wellington Jones (r) greet old friends.



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## Wishes Fulfilled

Thanks to Mickey Leggett of Nansemond Tractor, Inc., for the gift of the brand new Troy Bilt push mower. He sent it to us filled with gas and ready to go. What a generous gift!

Thanks also to Ann and Dutch Greene for the vacuum cleaner, another much needed tool. We can still use another one if anyone has one to spare as we often have a crew of volunteers here when we have a cleaning day. Thanks to Brian Meechan for the electric hedge trimmer and to Charles Sledge for a coffee maker. Thanks also to Susan T. Garrett for the small piano and to Don Goldberg for the floor lamp.

We can still use the following from our wish list.

Baskets, wheelbarrow, etc. for yardwork

Broom (we've been given 1, need another)

Rakes, Hoes

Bypass pruners

Shovels & Spades

Hedge clippers

Hand tools – general (trowel, etc.)

Paper products & trash bags (lawn & kit.)

Loppers

Weed eater

Basic tools/tool kit

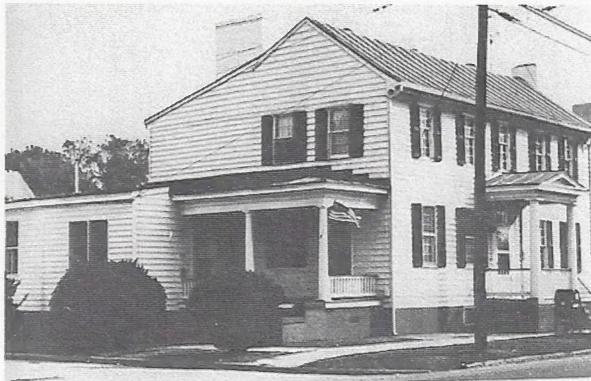
Vacuum Cleaner

*The family of Gerard Dawson is buried at the edge of the Kilby lot in Cedar Hill Cemetery. The Kilby have one of the largest lots in the old burying ground.*

Save the weekend of December 4 & 5 for a special Candlelight Tour.

SUFFOLK NANSEMOND  HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. Box 1255  
Suffolk, Virginia 23439-1255

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*This house is probably the oldest one still standing on N. Main Street. It belonged to Postmaster Arthur Smith early in the 1800's and was later home to John Richardson Kilby who built his law office next door in 1859.*